Mr. Williams's

SERMON

On the Day of the Interment of the Reverend

Mr. Solomon Stoddard.

The DEATH of a Prophet LAMENTED AND IMPROVED, IN A SERMON

Preach'd at Northampton,
Feb. 13. 1729.
On the Day of the Interment of the Reverend, Pious & Learned,
Mr. *Solomon Stoddard*
their Paſtor, who departed this Life
Feb 11. *Ætatis* 86
And now Publiſh'd at their Deſire.

By *W. Williams* M.A.
Paſtor of *Hatfield*.

Iſai. iii. 1, 2. *Behold, the Lord of Hoſts doth take away from Jeruſalem, and from Judah, the Prophet, and the Prudent, and the Ancient.*
Pſal. xii. 1. *Help Lord, for the godly man ceaſeth.*

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THE *Death of a Prophet Lamented & Improv'd.*

From ZECH. I. 5, 6.

Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?
But my words and my statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets, did they not take hold of your fathers? ——

THIS *Prophet* was one sent by GOD, to direct and comfort the *Jews* in their low & feeble state, after their return from the *Babilonish* Captivity.

He begins his Prophesy with an *Exhortation to Repentance*, it being that which would be the best Preparation for the Mercies they hop'd for. Their sinful Carriages had incens'd GOD's Displeasure, procur'd His Departure, and open'd a Door to the Miseries they had felt: Therefore without Repentance and returning to GOD, no

good

good was to be expected. It were well for Men if their Experience would teach 'em to *hate Sin*, as much as it *hurts* them. This *Exhortation* is deliver'd in the most forcible Manner, in the *Name and Authority* of the great GOD, who is LORD *of all the Hosts of Heaven and Earth*; together with a gracious Promise of His Return to them, upon their *sincere Return to Him*, v. 3. How inexcusable must Sinners be, that will dispute such an Authority, and slight such a Mercy! Another Argument is drawn from the fatal Effects of the Impenitency of their Fathers, under the Warnings of former Prophets: This is spoken to in *v.* 4 'Tis Wisdom to take Warning by others Harms.

In the Words of our Text, he enforces this Argument by proposing *two Questions* to 'em; to the latter of which they *answer*.

The *former* needed none, having been answer'd by the *Providence* of GOD towards 'em. *Your Fathers where are they, ?* &c. Q. d. Fathers and Prophets you once had, but now have 'em no longer. The word *Prophets* is us'd in Scripture sometimes for such as foretold things to come: This is the general Signification of the Word. Sometimes for such as expounded Prophesies, or open'd the Meaning of 'em to the Understanding of others, *Eph.* 4. 11. In this Sense CHRIST is call'd a Prophet, *Act.* 3. 22. Sometimes for any true Minister of the Gospel, endu'd with Wisdom to interpret and apply the Scripture, 1 *Cor.* 14. 22.

The

The *latter Question* is, *Did not my words take hold on your Fathers*? &c. In which he calls 'em to consider what Effects the *Messages* of the Prophets had had. When they deliver'd them they were little regarded, believ'd or fear'd by those to whom they were sent; they mock'd *His Messengers, and misused His Prophets*: but did they escape what GOD had threatned? Were they safe because secure and presumptuous? Did not my Word take *hold of*, *overtake*, or *sieze upon* your Fathers and You? As if he had said, Did you not find 'em to be *true*? Have you not found both the *Threatnings* declaring your Desolation, and the *Promises* assuring your Return, to be *True*? Have not I been as good as my Word?

In the latter part of the Verse we have their Answer; *Like as the Lord of Host thought to do unto us*, &c. so hath *He dealt with us*. GOD's Word has not fail'd of its Accomplishment, tho' the *Prophets* died, and did not many of 'em live to see it.

If we understand these Words as having no further Reference, than to the Threatnings of GOD, and declaration of Judgment; so we may take 'em as an Abstract of their Repentance. But if we understand 'em more generally, as extending both to Promises and Threatnings, we may take 'em us a Testimony of GOD's Faithfulness in all the Messages He had sent to them, whether of Grace or Judgment. And thus considered, they may be expounded to us by the Apostle, 1 Pet. 1. 24, 25. *For all Flesh is as Grass*,

Grass, and all the glory of Man as the Flowers of Grass; the Grass withereth and the flower thereof falleth away. But the Word of the Lord endureth for ever.

From the Words these two DOCTRINES may be noted;

I. *Men that are most desireable to us, and most useful to the World, must Dye and be taken out of it.*

II. *The Word of* GOD *must and will have its Effects, tho' they that bring it to us, don't live to see them.*

The Prophets died, but the Word took hold of their Fathers.

DOCT. I. *Men that are most desireable to us, and most useful to the World, must Dye and be taken out of it.*

Who, ordinarily, are more desirable to, more reverenc'd and esteem'd by, and more the glory of Children, than their *Fathers*? And who greater Blessings to the World, than faithful *Prophets* and Messengers, that GOD sends to it, to Warn of impending Evils, and to direct to the proper Way and Means of Safety & Happiness? These must all dye! tho' they live long with us, yet they *don't live for ever.* Whatever preservatives Persons may have from other Evils, there are

are none against Death. Eccl. 8. 8. *There is no discharge in that war,* ——? There are many things that render others desirable to us, and make us wish their Continuance with us; as their Piety, Wisdom, Learning, excellent Temper; Usefulness and Serviceableness to us and others, by their Prudence, Courage, wise and steady Conduct of Affairs that concern the common good; their excellent Examples, their Prayers, their Interest in Heaven, by which they are as Shields of the Earth; and such as stand in the Gap to turn away GOD's Anger from them, and instrumental to procure many Blessings for 'em. And particularly such who are near to us in the Bonds of Nature; who by many Indearments and Acts of Love we have from them, render their Lives desirable, and their Deaths grievous to us; yet these must be taken from us! Psal. 89. 48. *What man is he that liveth & shall not see Death?* Be he a King, yea as great and wise a King as *Solomon*, yet he must sleep with his Fathers. Be he a High Priest, who was of chief Rank in *Israel*, next their Kings, as *Aaron* and his Successors, yet he will *not be suffered to continue by reason of Death*, Heb. 7. 23. They were Mortal Men, Death forbad their Continuance in the Execution of their Office, in the Name of the Sovereign LORD of Life and Death. To shew the Certainty of this, *Aaron* is commanded to die at *Mount Hor*, in *the sight of all the Congregation*, Numb. 20. 27, 28. In whose Example they might see what all must expect in following Generations. And Prophets must die too; tho' they have been as *Moses*, admitted to

the nearest Familiarity with GOD, and have been the Ornaments & Glory of the World while they liv'd; yet must they lay down their Heads as others in the Dust. *The living know that they must dye*; and the dead too proclaim this Truth to us, by the corruptible Part they leave with us. This is a common Theme, but yet, by many, too much forgotten; and thence GOD so often rouses our Thoughts by evident Examples to dwell upon it: and it becomes us to take the Warning, to realize and improve this Truth.

The Reasons of this Doctrine, are,

1. That GOD *might testify to the Truth of His Threatnings*; and there might be a standing Witness to His Immutable Faithfulness in making good His Word, That Death should be the certain Wages of Sin; according to the righteous Sanction of the first Covenant, (Gen. 2. 17.) *In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.* Accordingly when Man had sinn'd, GOD pass'd this Sentence upon him, (Gen. 3. 19.) *Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return*: And none can reverse it. Sin has that malignant poysonous Influence in it, as to give a deadly Stroke to the whole Race of Mankind. Rom. 5. 12. *As by one man sin entred into the World, and Death by Sin; so Death hath pass'd on all men, for that all have sinned.* Persons are exceeding prone to call in Question the Truth of GOD's Threatnings, and to believe the Devil's Flatteries, that they shall not surely dye; to hope GOD will not deal with

with them according to that Covenant; nor vindicate His Holiness and Justice as He has threatned: but GOD plainly confutes these Flatteries, by the Power Death has had upon all Mankind from Generation to Generation. Yea, the Death of Infants as well as others, is a Seal to the Truth of that Threatning. And unless Men will be wilfully blind they must confess it; and by its Accomplishments should justly dread all the other Evils comprehended in it; and be excited to prize and improve the Grace of the New-Covenant, by which, Sin, the Sting of Death may be taken out, tho' Death it self won't be avoided.

2. From the *corruptible Nature of humane Bodies.* There can be no doubt but GOD could have upheld and continued humane Nature unto a state of Immortality, as He will the Bodies of Men after the Resurrection. Nevertheless 'tis certain that we consist of corruptible Materials. The Scripture calls our Bodies the *Earthly House of our Tabernacle*, which *must be dissolved*; and compares them to *Grass*, and the *Flowers of the field.* It tells us we have not the strength of Stones, nor is our Flesh Brass: That is, our Bodies are not of the like solid Consistence with these things. But if they were, yet we see Time will devour and consume these things; and how much more easily, those corruptible Materials of which our Bodies are made? Were these earthen Vessels not subject to be broken by any Accident, yet of themselves they will moulder away, and *return to the Dust.* Nor will our own Care or

the Skill of the ablest Physicians, be able long to preserve them: Yea, the very Things we make use of to uphold them, being corruptible, do many times hasten their Dissolution.

3. *To make way for the Accomplishment of God's Purposes concerning Men in the future World*, that they may be carried either to a State of Happiness or Misery, which they are fitted for in the present World. The Word of God assures us there shall be *two* different Places, which shall be the *Receptacles* of Mankind hereafter. That GOD intends to glorify His *Mercy* upon some, and His *Justice* upon others: To which End He has prepared *Heaven* from the beginning of the World, for those that shall be the Heirs of it. *Mat.* 25.34. And *Hell* for the Reception of others, *Isa.* 30. 33. And hence we read of *Vessels of Mercy prepared unto Glory*; and of *Vessels of Wrath fitted for Destruction*, Rom. 9. 22, 23. And their Removal from hence must make Way for their Entrance into these. GOD has prepared some better Thing for those He has set His Love upon, and imparted His Grace unto, than the best Room this World can afford; even a Place where the Immense Riches of His Love, Grace & Mercy, shall forever be conspicuous. Hence Christ tells His Disciples, Joh. 14. 2. *I go to prepare a Place for you.* And it is necessary that they should go also, that they may have the Possession of the Glory prepared for them; and if *I go & prepare a Place for you, I will come again and receive you unto my self, that where I am there ye may be*

also,

also, Ver. 3. 'Tis also necessary that those who live ungodly, should be carried to the Place reserved for them, where the Justice of GOD may be vindicated, for their Disobedience to, and Contempt of Him.

I shall make some Inferences from this Doctrine.

1. Let *none then feed themselves with the Hopes of Immortality here.* You will be ready to say, Can there be any so vain as to hope for this? Who see so many Instances of Man's Mortality from Day to Day? Who hear every Body confessing it; and who feel so many Symptoms of Death in their own Bodies? I suppose there are none will be found so foolish as to profess any such Hope: but notwithstanding too many bewray such Thoughts in their Hearts by their Practice. They never set any Bounds to Life, nor take any thorough Care to provide for Death. They labour to forget it, and put far away the Evil Day; wholly applying themselves to the Profits and Pleasures of the present Life. Of such the *Apostle* speaks, James 4. 13. who say, *To Day or to Morrow we will go into such a City, and continue there a Year, and buy and sell and get Gain*, promising themselves the Continuance of Life, as well as the Success of their Designs. And when one Business is dispatch'd, they are as big with Expectation of finishing another, as if they were just setting out. Whose Folly the Apostle refutes in *Ver.* 14. by minding them they can't command the Events of one Day. A further

their Proof of this our Saviour gives (*Luke* 12. 16 — 20.) in One, who said *I have Goods laid up for many Years*; not thinking that that Night his *Soul* might *be required*. How few comparatively are there, that live every Day as if it might be their last; That dare not boast of To-morrow; That maintain a lively Sense of their own Frailty; Who make it their serious Business to lay up a Treasure in Heaven. Indeed all such as are never willing to dye, but wou'd always be here, are in danger to flatter themselves with Hopes that they shall; who if they don't reckon Time by Hundreds & Thousands of Years, yet they do it by a continued Succession of Days & Weeks. They hope to Live this Day and the next, and so on without any End. But whatever vain Hopes of this kind any cherish, Death will surely disappoint them. Tho' you set no Bounds to your Designs and Desires, yet GOD hath set Limits to your Time. Your Days are determined, the Number of your Months are with Him: He hath appointed your Bounds that you cannot pass, *Job* 14. 5.

2. This should *teach us not to Idolize Men*; *even the best, the ablest and wisest of Men*; *by raising too great Expectations from them, or placing too much Dependance on them.* There are sometimes Men to whom it pleases GOD to impart so much of His Wisdom and Grace, that under GOD they are accounted as *Shields of the Earth*; the Strength and Glory of the Places where they Live: Who are ready to promise them-

themselves much from them; as the People of GOD did from their godly King *Josiah*, that under His Shadow they should live among the Heathen. But Humane Frailty should teach us to be modest and sober in our Expectations from Men; and to remember that tho' God honours some with the Name of earthly Gods, yet he tells us, *they must die like Men*; thence we have that Caution given us, Psal. 146. 3, 4. *Put not your trust in Princes, nor in the Son of Man in whom there is no Help. His Breath goeth forth, he returneth to his Earth, in that very Day his thoʼts perish.*

3. This *should instruct us to esteem & improve useful and desireable Men while they Live.* Tho' good and useful Men are not to be Idoliz'd, yet they are to be valued as singular Blessings from Heaven, to the Places where they Live. GOD is to be acknowleg'd for them, and due Praises given Him for His Gifts and Graces that are resplendent in them. They are not to be slighted, much less envied, but so improv'd that the Places where they Live may be the better for them. Their Counsels and Instructions are to be regarded: Their Examples to be observ'd & imitated. And we should be the more careful in this matter, because we can't expect to have them always with us, and it may be not long. Have Children wise and pious *Parents*? Have a People able, faithful and godly *Magistrates* or *Ministers*? Bless GOD for them, and get what good you can from them; don't provoke GOD to strip you of

of them the sooner, by your Unthankfulness or Contempt.

4. This *Truth should excite all to do what Good they can while they live.* Is Death certain? How forcible an Argument should this be, to improve Life to the best Purposes? Whilst we have Opportunity we should be willing and desirous to do Good. The shortness of our Season for Service to GOD or Man, should put us upon Diligence. So we are directed, Eccl. 9. 10. *What thine Hand findeth to do, do it with thy Might*; for there is no Work, nor Device, nor Knowledge, nor Wisdom in the Grave whither thou goest. For this we have our Saviour's Example, Joh. 9. 4. *I must Work the Work of Him that sent me while it is Day.* We have all of us Work to do, for GOD, for our Souls, for Eternity, and for the Benefit of others. We have but *a Day*, i.e. a short Time to do it in; *The Night cometh wherein none can Work.* To redeem Time, and fill up the Duty of the Day in the Day, is a high Point of Wisdom. A well spent Life will be, both a great Honour and a great Comfort at the Close of it. What Peace, will it afford, if then, in some measure of sincerity, we can say as our Blessed Lord Jesus, Joh. 17. 4. *I have glorifyed thee on Earth; I have finished the Work which thou gavest me to do.*

5. This Truth carries this Instruction to us all, to *make ready for Death.* It is what all must expect. Whatever other Differences there may be

be among Men, in this there is none; Death may sieze them, or a Change equivalent to it. Let none then neglect a serious thorough, seasonable Preparation for it. This is the great Business of Life; and as it is a Work of the greatest Importance, so it is of the greatest Hazzard. How many fatally deceive themselves with vain Hopes of a happy Death, while they are destitute of what is absolutely necessary to be done in order to it.

The Parable of the *Virgins* (Mat 25. *begin.*) is peculiarly design'd by our LORD to awaken, to caution and instruct us in this matter; to see to it that we have *Oyl in our vessels*, as well as *Lamps*, i. e. True Grace in our Hearts, as well as an Appearance of it in our Profession: That our Repentance for Sin be sincere; that our Faith in CHRIST be unfeigned; that our Dedication to GOD be universal and unreserved; that we are dead indeed unto Sin, but alive unto GOD thro' JESUS CHRIST our LORD; that by the Spirit of Grace we are indeed rais'd to Holiness and heavenly Mindedness, and a suitable longing after the Glories of the heavenly State. Happy they who are truly ready! Death will raise them to a higher State than the most excellent of the Earth! Yea, to be like the Angels of GOD!

DOCT. II. *The Word of GOD must and will have its Effect, tho' they that bring it to us, don't live to see it.*

Tho' *Prophets* dye, yet GOD that sends them lives, and will give Being to His Word. *My Words and my Statutes did they not take hold of your Fathers?* As our *Text*, so several other *Texts*, confirm this. Isai. 44. 26. *He confirmeth the Word of his Servants, and performeth the Counsel of His Messengers.* Isa 55. 11. *My Word that goeth forth of my Mouth, shall not return to me void; but shall accomplish that which I please, and shall prosper in the thing whereto I send it.* Mat. 24. 35. *Heaven and Earth shall pass away, but my Word shall not pass away.* Jer. 44. 28. *They shall know whose Word shall stand; Mine or theirs.* This has actually been confirmed, both as to His Threatnings and Promises. So 1 Sam 3. 19. *The Child* Samuel *grew, and the Lord was with him, and did let none of His Words fall to the ground.* 1 King. 8. 56. There *hath not fail'd one Word of all his good Promises, which he promised by the hand of* Moses *his Servant:* Tho' *Moses* had been long Dead, and never went over *Jordan*, to lead them into the Land of Promise. GOD's Prophets, and so all that are His faithful Messengers, come not in their own Name; speak not a Vision of their own Hearts, but are careful to deliver what they receive; to speak as the Oracles of GOD; they bring us Messages from GOD; Hence His Truth, Holiness, Justice and Grace are concern'd in their Accomplishment. Tho' to us it may sometimes seem otherwise, yet really it never is nor shall be. Rom. 3. 3, 4. *What if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid,* &c.

I purpose not to say much for the *Explication* of *this Doctrine.*

I shall mind you that the Apostle, in 2 *Cor.* 2. 15, 16. observes *two very different*, yea contrary Effects of his preaching the Gospel; which is also true of others. *We are*, says he, *unto God, a sweet savour in Christ, to them that are saved, and in them that perish; To the one we are a savour of death unto death, and to the other a savour of life unto life.* As sweet Smells, are to some pleasant and comfortable, but to others pernicious and deadly; so some grow worse under, while others find real benefits by the preached Word: some it kills, and some it quickens. Accordingly we find in Scripture *two Effects* of the Word, in and upon them that hear it. It has this effect in the hearts of some.

1. To *convince, convert, sanctify and comfort; to built up in Grace, and to ripen for Glory.* Acts 26. 18. The *Apostle* there tells us, That GOD sent Him *to open* Men's *Eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God; that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in Christ.* 2 Cor. 10. 4, 5. *The weapons of our warfare are mighty thro' God* &c. James 1. 18. *Of his own good will begat he us, by the Word of Truth.*

2. To *blind, harden, terrify, torment and condemn others, and seal them up unto Wrath.* That *Evangelical* Prophet *Isaiah*, was sent upon that heavy Errand, *Isai.* 6. 9, 10. They grew stupid and senseless, blind and hard under his Ministry.

They lov'd their perverse ways, they rejected and resisted the Truth, and GOD resolv'd their Sins should be their Punishment. So we read of the two Witnesses, Rev. 11. 10. *They tormented them that dwelt upon the Earth*; by their just and faithful Reproofs for their Sins, which awaken'd and alarm'd their Consciences to fly in their faces; to accuse and charge them for their Sins, which yet they would not reform. So *Noah*, the Preacher of Righteousness, *Condemned the old World*, Heb. 11. 7. And according to these Effects the Word has in the hearts of Men, they may expect the Accomplishment of either the Promises or Threatnings of it.

1. The *Word* considered as a *Word of Promise, secures Pardon, Life and Blessedness to all that believe and obey it.* The Gospel brings glad Tidings of Salvation, to a perishing World: GOD sends His Messengers as Heralds, not to proclaim War but *Peace*, upon most gracious, reasonable and honourable Terms; and where these are heartily complied with, GOD has oblig'd His Faithfulness, to bestow the Pardon of Sin and eternal Life. 1 Thes. 5. 24. *Faithful is he that calleth you who also will do it.* GOD hath engag'd His Truth, yea His *Oath*, for the Consolation of those, who have fled for Refuge to lay hold of the Hope set before them, *Heb. 6.* 18. Tho' *Jeremiah* did not live to see the *Jews* Restoration after the Seventy Years Captivity; yet GOD liv'd and perform'd His Word, rais'd up their *dry Bones*, remov'd all Impediments that lay in the way of that glorious Work.

2.

2. Considered as a Word of *Theatning*, it *binds over to Death, disobedient & unbeliving Sinners*, who continue to slight His offered Mercy; flattering themselves with Hope of Peace and Impunity in their Sins The Incredulous *Jews*, discredited the Warnings of the *Prophets*, and said, *They should not see Sword or Famine*; grew to that Height of Atheism, as to say, *The Lord will not do good, neither will he do Evil, but has forsaken the Earth.* The Prophet here demands, What was the Issue of these Presumptions? Whither they had not found GOD's Threatnings true? *Did not my Words take hold of your Fathers?* They return Answer; *Like as the Lord of Hosts thought to do unto us, even so has he dealt with us.* It will fare in like manner with Sinners, that continue Impenitent and Disobedient, under GOD's many Counsels and Warnings: They who, when they hear the *Words of the Curse, bless themselves, saying, They shall have Peace,* will find GOD's Word to be true. Hos. 7. 12. *I will chastise them as their Congregation hath heard.* Psal. 68. 21. *God shall wound the Head of His Enemies, and the hairy Scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his Trespasses.*

But I pass to the APPLICATION.

USE I. We may hence infer, *How great regard is due to the Word of GOD, in the Mouth of His Prophets and Messengers.* There is a Respect due to their Persons, on account of the Relation they stand in to GOD and CHRIST, and

and for *their Works sake*, 1 Thes. 5. 12, 13. But especially a Regard is due to *the Word* they bring to us from GOD, and which He engages His Faithfulness to accomplish. They sometimes give Warning from Him to Sinners, of the danger they lye open to, while they abide in the State of Sin, and in the Service of any Lust: They call upon them to repent and turn to GOD, that they mayn't perish in them. If this be your State, if you love your selves, regard these Warnings; fear and fly from Sin, turn to GOD by Repentance, or expect His amazing Vengeance will pursue and overtake you. They sometimes encourage you to put Honour upon redeeming Grace, to accept & submit to a Saviour, to commit the Case of your Souls into His Haud: They bring you the Commands and Promises of GOD, to warrant your so doing! Now then receive their Message; not as the Word of Man, but as it is in Truth, the Word and Will of GOD. GOD that sends them, authorizes them to speak in His Name, and will require it if their Testimony he despis'd or rejected. 1 Thes. 4. 8. *He that despiseth, despiseth not Man but God.*

USE II. We may infer, that when GOD's Prophets or Messengers are taken away, its *a proper season for those that have sat under their Ministry, and heard the Word of God by them, to enquire what Fruits and Effects it had upon their Hearts.* It is their duty frequently to do this while they enjoy their Ministry; but especially when they have *finished their Testimony*, and are call'd

call'd to give an Account to Him that sent 'em, should they solemnly enquire into the Success of their Messages. Thus the *Prophet* here calls upon the People of the *Jews* to do: and there is a doubleBenefit will accrue from it.

Either,

1. To *promote the Awakening of such as have been careless and unfruitful*; or

2. To *further the Comfort of those, that have believ'd and obey'd it.*

And it may be now proper for me to excite you of this *Congregation* in particular, from whom GOD has now remov'd your Aged, Painful and Faithful Prophet; and all others, who have occasionally enjoy'd the benefit of *his Ministry*, to consider what Effects it has upon your Hearts. All that knew him have acknowledged your Privilege to have been great: possibly some have envy'd it; and you have *glory'd* in it, that GOD had set up such a *Light in this Candlestick*: but you know that the best Privileges if not improv'd, will but inhance your Account and inflame your Reckoning.

Consider then,

1. Have *you receiv'd* his *Message as a Message from God?* Have you been able to say, That the *Word of God in his Mouth*, was the *Truth*; for it has come to you *in Power*, in *the Holy Ghost*, and *in much Assurance*? Have you found it effectual to discover *Sin*, and divorce your Hearts from it

it; to find out the ſecret Receſſes, and hiding places of Deceit; to ſweep away all the Refuges of Lies, under which you would have hid your ſelves; thoroughly to peirce and wound your Hearts, and make you long for Redemption from it? To beat down all high Thoughts of Relief from your ſelves; to convince you that your own *Righteouſneſs is as filthy Rags*, not fit to be a covering for your guilty Souls; and to bring you to the foot of GOD, in a full Conviction of His Righteouſneſs in holding you to the Law, and executing the Curſe of it upon you? Of your own, utter and everlaſting Unworthineſs of any Mercy; and of His Sovereign Freedom in the Diſpoſal of His own Grace? And have you been taught effectually that your Help is in CHRIST alone; and that there is a compleat Fulneſs in Him, to Save to the Uttermoſt, all that come unto GOD by Him? Is the Life you now live, by the *Faith of the Son of God*? Have you ſo receiv'd CHRIST JESUS the LORD, as to walk in Him? No longer to live to your ſelves, but unto Him that died for you, and roſe again? If it be thus, the great Ends of the Miniſtry have been attain'd. I know it has been the Hope of your bleſſed PASTOR, concerning many of you, that he has been a ſpiritual Father to you; as well as to many whom GOD has call'd home. I have nothing greater to wiſh for you, his dearly Beloved and Longed for, *than that you may ſo ſtand faſt in the Lord, rooted and grounded in your love to CHRIST*; may appear to be living and fruitful Chriſtians; adorning

adorning your Profession, and filling up the Duty of every Relation wherein you stand to GOD or Men. And in thus doing, I may mind you, that tho' all *Flesh be Grass, and the glory of Man as the Flower of the Grass; yet the Word of the Lord endureth for ever*: Even that Word, which by the Gospel has been preached to you, 1 *Pet.* 1. 24, 25. The *Word* upon which GOD has made you to hope, is of *eternal Truth*, and shall not leave you asham'd. Cleave to it, and live upon it under all the *Fears*, *Temptations* and dark Hours that may pass over you; in so doing you will be *his joy and crown in the day of CHRIST.*

2. Are there not a number among you, to whom it has been otherwise, *who have not received, believed and obeyed, the Message He has brought you from GOD*? Who have been call'd upon and warned, and that with Tears, of the dangerous and fatal Tendency of persisting in Ways of Sin; in Ignorance of CHRIST, Unbelief, Pride, Vain-glory, an insatiable Thirst after the World; dishonest and unrighteous Dealings, intemperate Drinking, wanton and lascivious Daliances; whereby GOD is offended, and the Name of CHRIST dishonoured? Many are Witnesses, how frequently and plainly he hath testified against these and other Evils. And *GOD is witness*, how often his *Soul has wept in secret Places for you.* But you have found Means either to bribe or baffle your Consciences under these Reproofs, and have not repented and reformed.

Well! Tho' *Death* hath clos'd *his* Eyes, and shut *his* Mouth, that he shall be no more a *Reprover* to you; yet let me mind you, that the Day will surely come, when the *Mouth of Conscience* in every one of you shall be opened, to accuse and condemn, for this Carelessness and Contempt. And the Word of *Threatning* which has been in the Name of GOD denounced against these Evils, shall be *fulfilled.* Psal. 50. 22. *Now consider this, ye that forget God, least I tear you in pieces and there be none to deliver.* But Oh! that the *sorrowful SERMON* which GOD preaches to you this Day, in His Providence, in *his* Removal, might awaken to *Consideration, Reformation* and *Prayer,* that your *Iniquities may not be your ruin.*

Lastly. From *both* these *Propositions,* let me *Infer,* How *justly the Death of pious* and *desirable Persons*; and particularly those *by whom GOD sends His Warnings to the World, is to be Lamented.* They must dye as well as others, but their Death should not be unobserved and unlamented. Indeed, not to lay it to *Heart* were a very ill *Omen.* Isai. 57. 1. *The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come.*

And this leads me to say something on the *sorrowful Occasion* of our being together at this time; which is to honour the Memory, and lament

ment the *Loss* of a Father and a Prophet, of a great and good Man that is fallen among us. This is our Duty, tho' it be so that *he is come to his Grave in a full Age, as a shock of Corn cometh in in his season*, full of Days and ripe for Heaven; with earnest Expectation waiting for his Change, longing to see and be with the *ever blessed JESUS*, in whom he had believed; professing his Interest in Him to be a Treasure, he more valued than a thousand Worlds; and was not at all dismayed at the Thoughts of leaving this Body to Dust and Rottenness, believing his Soul would be with CHRIST. It must be granted that these, and many other things, whereby his *Faith* and *Joy* in GOD, and *Triumph over Death* were discovered, do alleviate our Sorrows, and call upon us to acknowledge with Thankfulness the riches of that Grace, which had prepared him for an heavenly *Mansion*, and conducted him safe to it; yet they do not take away the *Occasion of Mourning*. The Prophet *Samuel* was an *Old Man* when he died, yet we read, 1 Sam. 25. 1. *That all the Israelites were gathered together and lamented him and buried him.* And we read, *Acts* 20. 38. That the *Elders of Ephesus*, *Sorrowed* when they should *see Paul's face no more*; tho' not long after, he calls himself *Paul the aged*. And truly the Fall of such an one seems to be like the falling of a mighty spreading Tree in a Forrest, which greatly thins its Glory, makes all the Trees about it to shake, leaves a wide Breach where it stood, which may be long ere it be fill'd again.

It is beyond me to give his Character, but *filial Respects* and *Reverence* will not suffer me to be wholly silent. All that knew him will confess that the loss of One, upon whom GOD had been so diffusive of his *Gifts* both *Natural* and *Supernatural*, and made so *extensively Useful*, is deservedly to be lamented! On how many Accounts was he desireable to us?

In his *Person*, which was comely and grave, and commanded Reverence from all that saw him, as if the God of Nature had suited his very Aspect to the Work he design'd him.

His *Conversation* was also grave, but delightful and very profitable, accompanied with a very sweet Affability & a Freedom from Morosenes; in which, tho' there was often Pleasentness, yet never any *Lightness* or *Vanity* to be observed.

If we look to the Indowments of *his Mind*, which GOD had adorned him with; there was Quickness of *Apprehension*, Strength of *Memory*, together with a clear and solid *Judgment*, which but seldom meet in such a Degree in the same Person. These were improv'd even from his Youth, and thro' the whole course of his Life, in much Reading, in diligent close Study, by which, thro' the blessing of GOD, he had acquired an uncommon Measure of all useful Learning; and especially in *Divinity*, which was his darling and most delightful Study; all Parts whereof he set himself to search into. He us'd a freedom in examining of things, and confin'd not himself to the Opinion of others.

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It was his frequent saying, We should *Study things to the Bottom.* Thence it is not strange, if in some Points his Judgment was different from others.

From his *early Days*, 'twas his desire to serve CHRIST in the *Work of the Ministry*, which he was wont not only to *Labour* but *Pray* that he might be fitted for; which Prayer GOD graciously *answered*, both by blessing his Studies, and giving him a *spiritual* and *experimental* Knowledge of the Truth: effectually *calling him by His Grace*, upon his Entrance into the Ministry; which Work was so *clearly carried on*, and made so *deep* an Impression upon his Spirit, that he always remembr'd it, and often spake of it, to the Glory of that Grace which had done it: And he was enabled in the Course of his Life to honour that Grace, in the *Circumspection and Holiness* of his Walk; and to live in a constant Dependance upon the *divine Faithfulness* and *Fulness of Christ*, to be Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption to Him, according to the Promise of the Gospel; which he enjoy'd a satisfying Perswasion of the Truth of, even to the End of his Days.

He was One who well understood the great *Ends of the Ministry*, which accordingly he applied himself unto: Even what the Apostle tells us, Acts 26. 28. *To open mens eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God*, &c. Eph. 3 8. *To preach the unsearch-*

unsearchable Riches of Christ. Accordingly, these were the main Points he was wont to insist on, *viz.* The impartial Strictness and Severity of the Law as a Covenant of Works; Man's utter Impossibility in his fallen Estate to be justifyed by it; the sinfulness and dangerous Tendency of Sin; the Necessity & Compleatness of CHRIST's Righteousness; the Nature of justifying Faith, and our constant need of CHRIST as Head and Surety of the New-Covenant, to begin and perfect the Work of Grace in our Souls; And also that the Kingdom of GOD is not in *Meat and Drink, but in Righteousness, Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost,* Rom. 14. 17. That the Essence and Life of Christianity lies not in *external Observations,* or formal Acts of Worship, but in our being made *Partakers of the Divine Nature,* and having the Image of GOD, we lost by Sin, restored; and in an Imitation of the Life of CHRIST. And he was able, thro' Grace to appeal to GOD, that he had obtained *Mercy to be Faithful.* It pleased GOD to give him *many Seals of his Ministry,* as we have reason to hope; even beyond what has been ordinary; who will therefore honour him with a glorious Reward, according to that Promise, Dan. 12. 3. *They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the Firmament; and they that turn many to Righteousness, as the Stars for ever and ever.* And in special,

1. Such of us, as *God hath set in the Ministry, have reason to Lament his Absence.* You will none of you blame me if I say, as the *Sons* of the Prophets

Prophets to *Elisha, Know ye not that the Lord hath taken away your Master from our Head to day?* You will easily understand me not as speaking of a *Master* distinct from CHRIST, but subordinate to Him. A *Teacher*, a *Helper*, a *Pattern* to us, in all Parts of our *Ministerial* Duty: Whose superiour Wisdom, Learning, Prudence, Experience and Communicativeness, render'd him so valuable an Instructor to us, and made his Conversation always pleasant and profitable. How often have our Ears when they heard him, blessed him! But now we must hear his Voice no more!

2. You in *this Place have particular Reason to mourn*; may take up the Prophets Lamentation, *The Crown is fallen from our Heads*! For how long a Time did GOD make him, the *Light and Glory*, the *Strength and Beauty* of this Place! Now proceeding in the *Sixtieth Year* of his Ministry among you; and enabled profitably to continue in it, to the *very Day* he was siezed with this last Sickness. Surely you can't forget how he has been with you *at all Seasons*; in all Trials and Changes of Providence, you have pass'd under. And how he has instructed, warn'd, charg'd and comforted you, as a Father his Children! With what constancy, chearfulness and unweariedness, he wore out his Life in your Service: How concern'd to guide you to CHRIST, and to build you up in Faith and Holiness, to support and direct you in all your Fears and Temptations! How fitted to speak a Word in Season to every one that was weary! How great

a Casuist! how accomplished a Divine! how truly excellent a Preacher! With what Wisdom and Fidelity he fed and rul'd the Church of GOD among you! How bright an Example of walking *with* GOD he set before you! To bury a spiritual Father, that through the presence and power of CHRIST had been an instrument of your living a better than a meer natural Life, you will look upon a great and just occasion of Mourning. But while you lament your loss, you will remember from whence you had so great a Blessing; and I hope 'twill excite and maintain among you a *Spirit of Prayer* for his *Son* and *Successor*, that the *Spirit of Elijah* may rest upon him: And that you will in all proper ways strengthen his Heart and Hands, under the weight of so much Work as is now rowl'd upon him.

3. All *the Neighbourhood*, who had Opportunity, occasionally to share with you in the Blessing of his Ministry, *will find their Loss and have reason to lament it*: And ineed the whole *Land*, who have been bless'd with his *Publick Labours*. All that knew him, might observe how near the *Publick Good* lay to his Heart; how earnestly he pray'd for it; how faithfully he testify'd against the Evils that threatned it; and how often he was devising Means to promote it's Welfare. When it's *Pillars fall*, how justly may the Land tremble! THE GOOD LORD HEAL ITS BREACHES!

FINIS.